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ABSTRACT

Studies on the effects of student-faculty interaction and connections between student-faculty interaction and institutional characteristics, college administration, and academic instruction are reviewed. Attention is directed to research investigating the correlations between student-faculty interaction and student development, student satisfaction, and student persistence. Studies have explored student-faculty interactions in the classroom and informal interactions outside the classroom. Additional research has assessed conditions that facilitate student-faculty interaction, including: institutional characteristics, the organizational model that dominates a college, the nature of institutional leadership, institutional mission, disciplinary perspectives, teaching effectiveness, and incentive programs. It is concluded that significant relationships between students and faculty have their origin in the classroom, with academic concerns. However, the extent to which faculty may be able to influence student intellectual and personal development is linked to whether college programs, policies, and practices support diverse faculty roles. Faculty may assume such roles as mentors, leaders, negotiators, instructors, consultants, and supervisors. (SW)

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STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION: DESIGN OR DEFAULT?*

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At a time when many undergraduate institutions are struggling to attract and retain students, one is compelled to ask, "What makes a student complete a four-year program at a given institution?" Proximity, specific majors, church-relatedness, academic success, campus involvement, and the like, may account in part for student persistence. However, substantial empirical evidence supports the conclusion that one key variable -- student-faculty interaction -- impinges on at least three interdependent concerns: student intellectual and personal development, student satisfaction, and student persistence. Moreover, student-faculty interaction may offer a critical link between typical content-based perspectives and developmental learner-based approaches to the "four critical years."

Inasmuch as student-faculty interaction is a significant variable in the perceived quality and enduring effects of undergraduate education, can evidence of structural and programmatic support for such interaction be found in undergraduate institutions? Do colleges whose mission and outcome statements emphasize "quality education," or "holistic development," give systematic attention to such interaction? Do institutional organization and governance typically reflect awareness that "frequent interactions between and among students and faculty may be the best single index of quality" (Kuh, 1981)? In short, what conditions facilitate student-faculty interaction, and can those conditions be purposely designed and fostered?

The study that follows is grounded in the conviction "that the nature and quality of human relationships on a campus provides a primary and profound resource for influencing the values of students" (Morrill, 1980:114). A synthesis of literature concerning the effects of student-faculty interaction and the kinds of interaction which make significant differences in perceived quality of education, leads to an examination of connections between student-faculty interaction and institutional characteristics, institutional administration, and academic instruction.

This examination provides a framework for discussion in the Conference session, "STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION: DESIGN OR DEFAULT?" The intent in the session is to encourage "a continuing process of critical self-examination that focuses on the institution's contribution to the student's intellectual and personal development" (Astin and Scherrei, 1980). While the paper focuses on research that has been done and on connections that can be drawn, the session itself will focus on implications of that research, as well as on means of ascertaining the extent to which student-faculty interaction occurs and of fostering meaningful interaction through purposeful policies and practices.

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WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION MAKE?

STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION CONTRIBUTES TO STUDENT DEVELOPMENT. Development is not simply an alteration, or "change," nor is it merely the "expansion of personality . . . the addition of parts . . . and the enlargement of existing parts," or "growth." Development is, rather, "the organization of increasing complexity" (Sanford, 1967:47); "development refers to qualitative changes that take place and contribute to the individual's increasingly complex interpretation of his world, allowing him to integrate and act on a wide variety of differentiated experiences and influences" (Touchton and others, 1978:153).

Benezet (1981:708) speaks of the "dual needs of students to find in the college (1) a vehicle for cognitive development in the broadest sense and (2) a model of social interaction that will hearten them for the lifetime of organizations ahead." This blend of intellectual and personal development is supported in literature concerning student development. The work, for example, of Chickering (1969; 1981), Erikson (1968), Fowler (1976), Gilligan (1981), Heath (1968), Knefelkamp (1978), Kohlberg (1971), Kolb (1981), Morrill (1980), and Perry (1970) confirms that "education should be directed toward the growth of the whole person." Bowen (1977:33) perceives such growth "through the cultivation not only of the intellect and of practical competence, but also of the affective dispositions, including the moral, religious, emotional, social, and esthetic aspects of the personality."

Detailed analyses of the impact of faculty on students in various types of institutions (Wilson and others, 1975) suggest that faculty contribute significantly to such development in students -- especially in "high-interacting" students. On the one hand, frequent interaction with faculty leads to greater "interest in and commitment to intellectual concerns " (159). On the other hand, high-interacting students also seem to develop a greater sense of personal and vocational identity, to display increased ability to form close relationships and influence peers (158-162), and to take advantage of campus-wide opportunities (165).

In addition, the counterpart of these students -- high-interacting faculty -- reaps similar affective benefits: greater sense of personal effectiveness, and recognition by colleagues and students as influential, superior teachers (164). Such observations confirm Astin's and Scherrei's (1980:98) conclusion that relations with students constitutes "the number one satisfaction area for faculty."

Other studies reinforce the positive correlation between student-faculty interaction and student development, both in and out of the classroom. Heath (1968), in his extensive research of Haverford students and alumni, concludes: "As has long been known, it is the lives of faculty that educate" (203). He goes on to say that "change is mediated primarily by the quality of one's personal relationships with others and the expectations that others have of the type of person one should become" (214). Stakenas (1972:465) identifies four conditions of changes in attitudes and skills valued in higher education. Two of these involve direct student-faculty interaction: (1) social interaction among students and between faculty and students, and (2) pervasive, informal and intellectually relevant relationships between faculty and students. What begins to emerge, then, is a montage of possible consequences, but definite corollaries, of student-faculty interaction.

STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION CONTRIBUTES TO STUDENT SATISFACTION. "In the final analysis, a student's satisfaction or dissatisfaction, success or failure, may depend more on the quality and interest of individual faculty members than any other factor" (Carnegie Foundation, 1977:78). Astin's (1977) studies are especially revealing in that among his several approaches to analyzing the "four critical years" of college, student-faculty interaction emerges repeatedly as a significant variable. It is second only to academic involvement as a predictor of overall satisfaction (169). Moreover, all eight categories rated in terms of student satisfaction are affected positively by student-faculty interaction (183-184): overall satisfaction, academic reputation, intellectual reputation, student-faculty relations, classroom interaction, friendship with other students, variety of courses offered, and the administration. Finally, despite the potency of student "input" (characteristics, abilities, interests, and the like, brought to the college experience), "satisfaction with student-faculty relations is less dependent on entering characteristics . . . than is any other satisfaction measure" (171), and this satisfaction is highly correlated with the frequency of interaction (172). Thus, Astin summarizes forcefully: "Student-faculty interaction has a stronger relationship to student satisfaction with the college experience than any other student or institutional characteristic" (223).

STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION CONTRIBUTES TO PERSISTENCE. Astin (1977:ch.4) observes that overall persistence is related primarily to dormitory living in the freshman year and to involvement at a four-year selective institution. He adds that, while academic achievement plays a significant role, high grades are not mandatory for the "persister," whom he defines as "anyone who completes a baccalaureate degree within four years or who is still enrolled four years after entering college. All other students are considered dropouts" (108).

Other research emphasizes persistence from freshman to sophomore years. Pascarella (1980:559), for example, relates freshman year persistence/withdrawal decisions specifically to (1) total frequency of student-faculty informal, nonclassroom contact, (2) frequency of interactions with faculty to discuss intellectual matters, and (3) quality of interactions. He concludes that "while extent of student-faculty informal contact may have a significant, positive influence on freshman year persistence, there is little direct evidence to suggest the importance of its influence after the freshman year" (560). Here is an area worthy of further investigation.

Clearly, indirect — if not direct — connections can be drawn between freshman-year and college persistence. Rather than abating, faculty influence may instead be strengthened over the four years, as evidenced by satisfaction related to growing familiarity with professors in prestigious small colleges (Astin, 1977:90) -- colleges in which persistence is greater than in less selective colleges, despite lower academic achievement (132). Rich and Jolicoeur (1978:157) report that "the longer a student remains in school, the more attention he or she perceives is paid to students." Such observations, coupled with Heath's (1968:202) findings that "the freshmen talked of specific courses quite independently of the faculty who taught them," whereas "the seniors and alumni talked of faculty quite independently of the specific courses they taught," suggest that ongoing student-faculty interaction does indeed make a difference that matters.

WHAT KINDS OF STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION BEGINS IN THE CLASSROOM. The classroom, while designed primarily for cognitive purposes, is an arena of human interaction; as such it is a personal arena regardless of its intellectual content. Significant relationships tend to have their origin in at least one course -- often in two or more courses. Since "a major part of teaching and learning may involve successful modeling or identification" (Wilson and others, 1975:108), the classroom serves not only as the initial point of contact but as an arena for observing faculty behavior. That behavior provides cues regarding openness and availability which are "the most important aspects of the most significant relationships that students have formed with faculty" (130). Pascarella and Terenzini (1977:551) note that these cues to accessibility for interaction are found particularly in "in-class teaching styles and attitudes." Thus, "cognitive style is a potent variable affecting . . . how students learn and teachers teach, and how students and teachers interact in the classroom" (Witkin, 1976:39).

Although students bring highly diverse selves to the classroom, they share basic perceptions of what constitutes meaningful relationships with faculty. In their detailed exploration of the many circumstances and ways in which students and faculty interact and relate, Wilson and others (1975) conclude that highly influential teachers are perceived, above all, as making their classes "interesting" (105) and as being concerned about issues of importance to students (drugs, sex and morality, lifestyles, careers, and the like). "The key to having an impact on students may well be a teacher's willingness to openly discuss such issues, rather than the extent to which he agrees with students concerning the subjects discusses" (196). In sum, faculty perceived to be interesting, open, available, intellectually stimulating, demanding of high quality work, and helpful in building student confidence are those with whom the most significant relationships are formed (131).

INFORMAL STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION ENHANCES THE QUALITY OF THE UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE. As influential as faculty may be in the academic classroom, and in spite of enthusiasm and concern that may be generated there, "the relationships that faculty and students develop outside the classroom may well be the part of teaching which has the greatest impact on students" (Wilson and others, 1975:151). Gaff (1983) concludes that "teaching and learning occur outside the classroom, as instructors engage their students' substantive social and personal concerns" (154), and that "conditions that increase the frequency, closeness, breadth, and duration of student-faculty relationships tend to enhance the development of students toward the ends of general education" (152).

Others concur with these conclusions. Pascarella and Terenzini (1977) emphasize the holistic impact of informal student-faculty contact, reporting that informal relationships have their "most significant impact on students' social and academic integration" by "helping the student develop an interest in ideas and intellectual concerns which extend beyond the classroom into more leisurely interpersonal settings" (551). Gaff and Gaff (1981:649) summarize "particularly beneficial relationships as continuous (having been initiated early in the student's college career), casual, and personally engaging." Kuh (1981:21) identifies specific effects of such informal interactions: greater satisfaction with college, higher degrees of achievement on standardized tests, decreased tendency to drop out, and

greater likelihood of pursuing advanced degrees. Finally, Pascarella (1980), in an in-depth review and summary of literature relating informal contact and college outcomes, goes on to analyze the evidence, results and methodologies, to identify weaknesses of existing studies, and to discuss implications for further research. He concludes (564):

> Modest, but statistically significant, positive associations exist between amount of student informal, nonclass contact with faculty and such educational outcomes as satisfaction with college, educational aspirations, intellectual and personal development, academic achievement and freshman to sophomore year persistence in college . . . such associations remain statistically significant even after a wide range of student entering characteristics and, in a few studies, measures of college experience in other areas are taken into account.

WHAT FACILITATES STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION?

INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS MAKE A DIFFERENCE. Although a considerable amount of research has documented correlations between formal and informal student-faculty interaction and overall education of students (e.g., Feldman and Newcomb, 1969; Jacob, 1957; Pascarella, 1980; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1977; Wilson and others, 1975), there seems to be a paucity of data which explore connections between institutional policies and practices and student-faculty relationships. Most data deal specifically with institutional characteristics.

Those institutions most conducive to student-faculty interaction tend to be highly selective, small, private, four-year, residential colleges (Astin, 1977; Feldman and Newcomb, 1969; Kuh, 1981; Rich and Jolicoeur, 1978; Wilson and others, 1975). "By far the most important institutional attribute is size: Students in small colleges are much more likely to be satisfied with student-faculty relations than those in larger institutions" (Astin, 1977:172); they are more likely to become involved in campus life (23) and to increase contact with faculty throughout the four years (Rich and Jolicoeur, 1978:61). However, closeness with faculty, especially familiarity with professors in academic majors, is greatest among prestigious colleges (Astin, 1977:90,179) and is also related to more theoretical and aesthetic student orientations (Rich and Jolicoeur, 1978:58).

"At institutions with a strong residential emphasis, both students and faculty are more likely to become involved in the educational process" (Astin and Scherrei, 1980:151), but commuters feel less satisfied and perceive "faculty attention" to be lower (Rich and Jolicoeur, 1978:58; Astin, 1977:249). Church-relatedness is associated with greater growth in all areas except in that area most closely connected to student satisfaction, that is, intellectual development:

> Seniors at church-related colleges are only slightly more likely than freshmen to feel that there is close faculty-student contact, whereas at secular colleges there is a strong increase. This may be why seniors at church-related colleges rate their schools less favorably than do freshmen (Rich and Jolicoeur, 1978:60).

INSTITUTIONAL ADMINISTRATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE. The term "administration" is used here in Benezet's (1981:707) sense: "the total set of operations by which the organization is led." Implicit is the perception that an organization of higher education which is "led" -- as contrasted with "run" or "managed" -- becomes "a product of interaction and adaptation" (Selznick, 1957:22), an "institution infused with value." If "the ultimate goal of administration in any organization is to facilitate the fulfillment of the aims of that organization" (Astin and Scherrei, 1980:1), connections among organizational model, institutional leadership, and mission must be examined.

Organizational Models

Positing that the organizational model which dominates a college "will affect the attitudes, behavior, and overall satisfaction of faculty and students," Astin and Scherrei (1980:9) review three basic models: bureaucratic (Weberian Ideal-Type), collegial (humanistic "community"), and structuralist/political (pluralistic compromise). They draw upon a sample, primarily of small liberal arts colleges, to investigate the impact of four presidential types: bureaucrat, intellectual, egalitarian, counsellor (ch.3); and five administrative styles: hierarchical, humanistic, entrepreneurial, insecure, task-oriented (ch.4). Several observations serve to highlight possible connections between institutional administration and student-faculty interaction.

Astin and Scherrei conclude, for example, that "presidential and administrative styles can have a significant impact on student persistence" (126). Bureaucratic structures and styles have a negative impact on teaching and are "more strongly associated with attrition than is institutional size" (18). Hierarchical patterns, coupled with emphasis on administrative "tasks" rather than on teaching (90), may affect the quality of education, perhaps because "concepts of time and authority are distinctly different from those in industry and business" (McHenry and Associates, 1977:197; cf., Besse, 1973). While selected management principles may apply (Keller, 1983; Peters and Waterman, 1982), higher education's complex arena of diverse purposes and interacting personnel (Cohen and March, 1974) does not lend itself to clearly defined functional offices, rational "profit-making" procedures, and managerial efficiency (Weber, 1947; Baldridge, 1971; Barnard, 1938).

Under a humanistic administration, "faculty tend to be satisfied with their influence and their relations with students" (Astin and Scherrei, 1980:101). Moreover, "the egalitarian president and the humanistic administration . . . are associated with student satisfaction" (125). Although such conclusions may not be definitive -- they remain a matter of some debate (Kuh, 1981:12-13) -- they do encourage purposeful organizational conceptualization and deliberate choice of administrative style. Indeed, which model or style is chosen may not be as crucial as the process of deciding "which model offers the best basis of governance consistent with a climate of education that preserves the caring, individualizing activities of professors with students . . . " (Benezet, 1981:717).

Leadership

"It is peculiarly the function of leadership to enhance the humanness of an institution" (McHenry, 1977:208). That leadership rests on "organizational integrity . . . the way in which the academic life of the institution is ordered by a system of accepted traditions and principles that give the institution a persistent, coherent, and yet responsive personality" (185). It rests, as well, on value infusion -- the "transition from administrative management to institutional leadership" (Selznick, 1957:4; cf., Baldridge's [1971:206] bureaucratic number manipulator versus "creative statesman").

Inasmuch as "the president remains the chief exponent of the educational mission, the goals sought, and the quality of performance that is required to attain those goals" (McHenry, 1977:207), presidential leadership has not only direct "proximate" effects on faculty charged with "educating" students, but indirect influence on "distal" outcomes of student-faculty interaction, student development, satisfaction, attrition, and the like (cf., Astin and Scherrei, 1980). Particularly in times of retrenchment, decreasing funding, lower enrollments, et cetera, leaders are advised to recall Selznick's (1957:ch.5) two mandates for responsible institutional leadership: (1) the avoidance of opportunism ("narrow pursuit of immediate, short-run advantages in a way inadequately controlled by considerations of principle and ultimate consequence"), and (2) the avoidance of utopianism (reliance on over-generalized, unrealistic purposes to guide decisions, or on "the hope that the solution of technical problems will solve institutional problems"). Though tempting as tactics for survival, opportunism and utopianism may preclude the insitutional ethos conducive to organizational integrity and student development.

Institutional Mission

According to Sanford (1964:298), what colleges need most of all is "knowledge of themselves, of what they do and of what they should do" (implicit in Gaff, 1983; Gamson, 1984; Martin, 1982; Morrill, 1980). Research such as Heath's (1976) study of Haverford alumni demonstrates that although it may involve a complex, time-consuming project, it is possible to acquire considerable knowledge of what a given institution does. Other studies (e.g., Wilson and others, 1975; Astin, 1977; Pace, 1979; Pascarella, 1980) reveal that comparative data can be gathered as well. Knowledge of what a college should do, however, may be another matter. Referring specifically to liberal arts colleges, Sanford (1964:298) comments: "The inarticulateness of these colleges about their aims is often baffling, and so is their failure to understand the real source of their difficulties."

Pace (1979) provides insight into connections between institutional mission and student development in his conception of the institution as "an environment" (128):

> The facilities it provides, the expectations it communicates, the behavior it rewards, the way its members relate to one another, and its policies, procedures, and programs create an atmosphere intended to exemplify its purposes. To the extent that this image or ethos is clearly perceived, it is a shaping force or stimulus for student development.

Pace discovers that "institutions are generally successful in creating the kind of psychological and educational climate they aim to create." Concomitantly, "students report progress toward objectives that are congruent with the institution's environmental emphasis and aims" (163). Clearly, if "the way its members relate to one another" serves to exemplify an institution's purposes, then student-faculty

interaction, a significant variable in student "progress," is an important link between institutional mission and student perception of that mission.

ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION MAKES A DIFFERENCE. Teaching, "the institutional arrangement of situations in which appropriate learning will occur" (Menges, 1981:556), gives human form both to institutional mission and to an academic discipline. If the mission is "intellectual and personal development of students," then the student and student learning must serve as the focal point of all policies, practices and programs. Inasmuch as academic involvement is the primary predictor of overall satisfaction (Astin, 1977), the faculty member serves not only as a translator of institutional mission but as a critical link between the college curriculum and the student's own academic program.

Disciplinary Perspectives

"Within a framework of academic freedom and responsibility, it is the diversity of intellectual disciplines, interests, approaches and determinations that gives a university ongoing life" (McHenry, 1977:187). Yet faculty are "ensconsed within their respective disciplinary cultures" (Wilson and others, 1975:66; cf., Dressel and Marcus, 1982:ch.10): humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and professional-applied fields. Each academic discipline, or "set of scholarly, pedagogical, social, and political practices carried out by an epistemic community" (Halliburton, 1981:453-454), brings its own tendencies to bear on teaching and learning. Each discipline provides, in addition, its own "terministic screen" (Burke, 1966) with its accompanying symbols to be mastered. What the student encounters, therefore, is substantive diversity and idiosyncratic faculty, as well as methodological diversity preserved in and by departmental structures.

These structures, though convenient "means of decentralizing administration of instruction and research" and of making academic decisions "as close as possible to the day-to-day interactions between faculty members and students" (Carnegie Foundation, 1977:66), may become harbors of disciplinary territoriality as well. To the extent that teaching becomes a defense of territory, faculty and students may fail to perceive cross-disciplinary relationships and to address major issues of life (McHenry, 1977:212) -- typical goals of undergraduate education. (For recent treatments of general education, see Boyer and Levine, 1981; Gaff, 1983, 1984; Gamson, 1984; Martin, 1982; Morrill, 1980; Winter, 1981.)

Heath (1968) states, "Narrow commitment to one's specialty does not offer . . . a satisfying solution to the conflicts induced by the intellectual demands of the college" (204). To the contrary, faculty are appreciated "for their ability to reveal new patterns and meanings within and between intellectual fields, as well as for their demands that the student learn to analyze problems from diverse or more allocentric viewpoints" (205). Yet, as Gaff (1984:9) observes, "As I look over most curricula today I see few efforts to cross the barriers of the disciplines."

Teaching Effectiveness

"The primary goals of institutions affect the teaching practices found at those institutions" (Wilson and others, 1975:25); improved instruction requires "strategies that take cognizance of the kinds of teaching and educational objectives which are to be practiced and valued" (29). Lindquist (1975:33) goes so far as to place teaching improvement in the context of institutional survival: "Significant survival for many colleges and universities comes down to effective teaching.

Survival is not going to be very meaningful if the interaction between faculty and students is not rewarding to everyone involved, especially students." Lindquist (1981:746) concludes: "College leaders and faculty members must invest in systematic professional development."

Smith and others (1981:27) concur: "One of the critical issues concerning campus health is the level of performance of the faculty in classroom teaching." They are not suggesting that faculty are unconcerned about student intellectual and personal development but, rather, that faculty come to an institution with very limited knowledge of "learner readiness" or of "teaching," itself. Thus, if support for professional development is not provided, faculty continue to rely on "assumptions about the teaching-learning contract which learning research has shown to be obsolete" (17). "Most important," says Menges (1981:579), "is an institutional policy that regards changes in students as the primary mission of the institution and that rewards those faculty members who plan and conduct instruction in ways that bring about desired changes."

Incentive Programs

Significant student-faculty interaction and improved instruction do not "just happen"; arrangements must be made "for students to know teachers and teachers to know students" (Sanford, 1967:172). Since "the disciplinary department is firmly established as the predominant body in the college and university firmament" (McHenry, 1977:x), and since "conventional departments foster a specialization and particularization that narrows the horizons of both students and professors" (xi), it is not surprising that hiring policies and reward structures reinforce traditional disciplinary scholarship rather than learner-centered teaching (Menges, 1981; McHenry, 1977; Lindquist, 1975; Dressel and Marcus, 1982). Moreover, "effects of demographic trends, decreasing financial support from government and industry, and increasing operating costs" (Rich and Jolicoeur, 1978:64) make rewards for unconventional use of faculty time even more problematic. Yet, where learner-centered teaching is not encouraged — i.e., administratively rewarded — it is unlikely to occur.

Thus, the amount of student-faculty interaction is related not only to a given professor's educational philosophy, classroom practices, personal gratification, and the like, but to perceptions of the "formal reward structure." "Meeting with students and helping them to develop their minds and their personalities is time-consuming and even fatiguing work" (Wilson and Gaff, 1971:53) that may fly in the face of credit-hour generation. In concert with Hodgkinson's (1981:723) observation that "credit hour production data are not very analytic; they tell you very little about what is really going on," the Carnegie Foundation (1977:78) recommends such rewards as higher salaries, lighter course loads, and promotion considerations for faculty who participate in demanding undergraduate programs. Whatever the appropriate incentives, mechanisms must be built into institutional policies and practices if students are to benefit from increased contact with faculty.

"The effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement in learning" (Mortimer and others [NIE] 1984:19). If involvement is to increase; if "faculty and other institutional resources" are to be reallocated "toward increased service to first- and second-year undergraduate students" (25); if "the amount of personal contact between students and faculty on intellectual issues" is to increase (29); then we must "institutionalize an incentive system for quality teaching and academic involvement with undergraduates" (59).

SUMMARY

"The more faculty counsellors and college administrators read and think about their role in providing the best possible education for students, the better chance we will have of making a difference" (Cross, 1976:169). We know that "conditions that increase the frequency, closeness, breadth, and duration of student-faculty relationships enhance the development of . . . students" (Gaff and Gaff, 1981:649). We are convinced that significant relationships have their origin in the classroom, with academic concerns. What is not known, however, is the extent to which ongoing informal contacts "might be influenced by purposeful institutional policies" (Pascarella, 1980:567). We know, further, that in many ways "it is the lives of the faculty that educate" (Heath, 1968:203). What is not as obvious is the degree to which those faculty lives -- and consequent education -- are affected by the institutional milieu.

Astin and Scherrei (1980:153) state forthrightly: "Administrators must realize that virtually every institutional policy and practice . . . can affect how students spend their time and how much effort they devote to academic pursuits." What must be recognized is that faculty must assume responsibility for playing many interactive, sometimes conflicting roles (mentor, leader, manager, negotiator, instructor, consultant, entertainer, supervisor, persuader [Cross,1976:ch.8]); they may be able to effect student intellectual and personal development only as institutional programs, policies and practices are designed purposely to support those diverse roles and foster student-faculty interaction.

Clearly, more research is needed. Nevertheless, available data point to definite correlations between student-faculty interaction and student development, student satisfaction, and student persistence. The data point, as well, to sufficient connection between interaction and institutional milieu to merit serious further consideration. What does not happen by design may, indeed, rarely happen by default.

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